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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY China

SUBJECT Shortage of Construction Materials and Metal Products

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[REDACTED] While technical know-how was not lacking, because of the large numbers of Soviet engineers and foremen in northwestern China, construction materials, especially metals, were pitifully short. Hence, in the construction of the much publicized Hienshui-Lanchow Railroad, lots of the old and scrapped tracks from other railroad lines had to be used and a drive for scrapped iron was launched in all parts of the country.

5. According to a copy of the Canton Southern Daily (Nan Fang Jih Pao) [REDACTED] it was reported that during the month of June 1953, in Lung-Chuan district in Kwangtung Province, the drive for copper and iron scrap was very successful. For 1,200 catties of fertilizer, the Communists had obtained:

- over 100 catties of copper
- over 500 catties of iron
- over 1,100 catties of old iron kettles.

6. In the city of Canton, ever since April 1953, it has been almost impossible for the common people to buy such items as sheet metal, metal wire, tin wares, etc. When such items are available in the black market, the price is prohibitive. To discourage the use of metal building materials the city government has issued practically no permits in the last three months for reinforced concrete buildings.

7. In July 1953, twenty-six factories on Honam Island, facing the main city of Canton, were confiscated by order of the Ministry of Light Industry of the People's

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Central Government, on the recommendation of Vice-Minister Wang Tao-han during his inspection tour of Canton. These 26 factories, which manufactured metal tools and tin cans, had been closed for sometime before their confiscation. Though the premises were occupied by the police, there were no signs of resumption of activity. [redacted] the installations were crated and sent north on the Canton-Hankow Railroad.

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